

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES



WELCOME TO BIRCH COPSE'S TERMLY LETTER FOCUSED ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES.

Local Support for SEND



SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice and Support Service) is a free, confidential and impartial service for families of children and young people (aged 0–25) with SEND. They offer practical information, support and guidance to help you understand your child's needs, the SEND system (including SEN support and EHC plans), options for schooling and provision, and your rights and choices. SENDIASS can listen to your concerns, help you prepare for meetings, and support you with letters, forms and next steps if you feel you need extra help or explanation.

[Reading SENDIASS](#) [West Berkshire SENDIASS](#)



Parenting Special Children is a Berkshire-based charity supporting parents and carers of children with additional needs, including autism, ADHD and emotional or behavioural differences. They offer parent courses, workshops, support groups and a helpline, helping families feel less alone and more confident in supporting their child at home and at school.

[Parenting Special Children](#)



Autism Berkshire is a local charity that provides support, information and training for autistic children and young people, as well as their parents and carers. They offer a wide range of services including parent workshops, support groups, social opportunities for children and young people, and advice around understanding autism, behaviour, sensory differences and emotional wellbeing. Autism Berkshire works closely with families across Berkshire to help them feel informed, supported and confident in meeting their child's needs.

[Autism Berkshire](#)



Swings & Smiles is a Berkshire-based charity that supports children with disabilities and additional needs, along with their families. They offer inclusive play sessions, family events and specialist facilities designed to provide a safe, welcoming space where children can play, explore and build confidence at their own pace. Swings & Smiles also provides support and opportunities for parents and carers to connect with others who have shared experiences.

[Swings & Smiles](#)

What is Executive Functioning?

Executive functions are the skills we use to manage everyday tasks and challenges.

Executive function skills help children to:



- start tasks and keep going
- follow instructions
- manage emotions and impulses
- organise their belongings and ideas
- remember what to do next
- switch between activities or cope with change

These skills develop gradually throughout childhood and into early adulthood. For some children, particularly those who are neurodivergent (such as children with ADHD or autism), executive functioning can be more challenging.

Children with executive function difficulties may:



- struggle to get started on work, even when they understand it
- forget instructions or lose track of what they're doing
- find it hard to sit still or wait their turn
- become overwhelmed by busy classrooms or changes in routine
- have big emotional reactions to small problems
- lose equipment or forget to bring things home

It's important to remember that these behaviours are not about laziness, rudeness or a lack of effort. Often, these children are trying very hard – their brains just need more support to organise and regulate.

In school, we support children's executive functioning in lots of small but important ways, including:



- clear, predictable routines
- visual timetables and prompts
- breaking tasks into smaller steps
- reminders and check-ins from adults
- movement breaks and opportunities to reset
- calm spaces and emotional support when needed

These strategies help reduce overwhelm and allow children to focus on learning rather than managing stress.

Some children also benefit from similar support at home. You might like to try:



- using visual routines or checklists for mornings and evenings
- giving one instruction at a time
- offering gentle reminders rather than repeated questions
- building in movement or rest breaks after school
- keeping expectations realistic at the end of a long day

Praise effort rather than outcomes. Comments like *"I can see you're trying"* or *"That was tricky, but you kept going"* help build confidence and resilience.



Upcoming Events in Our Area – Please click on the links for more details and eligibility criteria

Understanding More About Autism – Autism Berkshire


Wednesday 7th January 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Free online workshop for parents/carers exploring autism, assessment pathways and practical support strategies.

 [Event info](#)

Group PPP – Brighter Futures for Children Parenting Programme

Tuesday 13th January–Tuesday 15th March 2026, 9.30–11.30am

A positive parenting programme for parents/carers with children aged 4–11. Learn strategies to strengthen parent–child relationships, understand behaviour and support your child’s development.

 **Booking info:** Email parenting@reading.gov.uk or call **0118 937 4858**

Autism & Teenagers – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 14th January 2026, 10.00–11.30am

Online workshop focusing on adolescence, independence, behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

 [Event info](#)

ADHD Course (3 sessions) – Parenting Special Children

Thursdays 15th, 22nd & 29th January 2026, 7.00–9.00pm

Online course for parents/carers supporting children with ADHD.

 [Event info](#)

Sensory Differences (Part 1) – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 21st January 2026, 10.00–11.30am

Understanding sensory processing differences and how they affect learning and behaviour.

 [Event info](#)

Sensory Differences (Part 2) – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 28th January 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Follow-up session with practical sensory strategies.

 [Event info](#)

Understanding Emotional Regulation – Parenting Special Children

Wednesday 28th January 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online workshop exploring emotional regulation and practical tools to support children.

 [Event info](#)

Anxiety & Autistic Teenagers – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 4th February 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Strategies to help autistic teenagers manage anxiety and build resilience.

 [Event info](#)

Autism & Mainstream Schools – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 11th February 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Understanding how mainstream schools support autistic pupils and how families and schools can work together.

 [Event info](#)

Interoception & Self-Regulation – Parenting Special Children

Tuesday 17th February 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online workshop exploring interoception and its role in emotional regulation.

 [Event info](#)

Understanding PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) – Parenting Special Children

Tuesday 24th February 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Workshop for parents/carers exploring PDA profiles and supportive strategies.

 [Event info](#)

Supporting Behaviour (Part 1) – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 25th February 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Understanding distressed behaviour and meltdowns.

 [Event info](#)


Supporting Behaviour (Part 2) – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 4th March 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Follow-up session with practical behaviour support strategies.

 [Event info](#)


Emotional Regulation in Autistic Children – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 11th March 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Practical tools to support emotional understanding and regulation.

 [Event info](#)

Teenagers & Social Situations – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 18th March 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Supporting friendships, social communication and online interactions.

 [Event info](#)

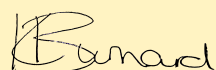
Eating & Mealtime Challenges – Autism Berkshire

Wednesday 25th March 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Understanding eating difficulties and practical mealtime strategies.

 [Event info](#)

Book a meeting with me –

<https://calendly.com/kburnard-birchcops>



Katie Burnard SENCo

senco@birchcops.co.uk